



St Mary's C.E. Primary School

Spirituality Policy

Approved by governors: August 2024

Date of next review: 2026

“Everything is possible for one who believes.” Mark 9:23

Dream, believe, achieve.

Rationale

Spirituality is a powerful force that determines what we are and our self-understanding. It forms the basis for successful relationships and shapes our behaviour and outlook on life, others, and the world. It is the way we combine our thoughts and emotions to reflect, respond to and seek to give meaning and purpose to the experiences that we encounter in life.

As a Church of England School, our spirituality is expressed through our understanding of the Christian gospel, rooted in the person of Jesus Christ. We fully respect that our pupils come from Christian families, from families of other faiths and from families of no faith. Through our spirituality policy, our aim is to enable all our pupils to reflect deeply on what it means to be human and to value human existence. This will be fostered through our ethos, vision, values and aim to encourage all children to grow and flourish spiritually. This is an integral element of the range of learning opportunities and experiences the encounter as part of the curriculum and their experiences they have in school which permeates all strands of school life.

The windows, mirrors, door and candle analogy clarifies this meaning. We gaze through our windows onto the world, responding with our emotions and trying to make sense of what we see. We use mirrors to reflect on our own thoughts and feelings and how what we see through the windows connects with our inner selves, and how we connect with what we see and understand. This becomes a spiritual experience when it transforms us and so we walk through the door into life differently from before. For some, this leads to a sense of transcendence: in other words, a feeling or belief in something exists beyond what can directly be seen. This is our candle moment, and Christians would describe this state as God.

Aims

We aim to establish the right learning environment to enable to spiritual development of all pupils through the following objectives:

- Develop an appreciation of their uniqueness and value as a child made in the image of God;
- Develop an understanding of the distinctive ethos of St. Mary's as well as the context, language and symbolism of the Christian faith;
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the school's core Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them;
- Develop an awareness of and respect for other people's beliefs and faiths and the ability to articulate their own;
- Develop an appreciation of what it means to be a part of a community and how we can all play a part in improving our community and our responsibilities to do the right thing (e.g. using their gifts and abilities in the service of others);
- Develop strategies to build good mental health;
- Foster self-awareness and encourage pupils to make good choices;
- Develop the skills and language required to enable children to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life (e.g.: through RE, Science, Reflection Time, prayer and worship);
- Begin to understand and make sense of their own feelings and emotions around certain encounters and events that occur in their life;
- Develop an awareness that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth;
- Understand the value of difference and diversity through involvement with others;
- Encourage curiosity, creativity and imagination;

- Develop the ability to reflect upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty etc
- Develop a capacity to value the natural world, a sense of awe and wonder and a commitment to care for creation;
- Ask and ponder big questions;
- Strive to make a positive difference to others and the world, both locally and globally.

Organisation and Implementation

The development of spirituality is as fundamental to a child's education as other areas of learning.

Without curiosity, without inclination to question and without the exercise of imagination, insight and intuition, children would lack the motivation to learn. In view of this, teaching cycles are adopted which:

- Value the children's questions and give them space for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns.
- Enable children to make connections between aspects of their learning.
- Encourage the children to relate their learning to a wider frame of reference e.g. asking why, how, where as well as what.

Spirituality is an interwoven part of all aspect of school life and is nurtured and promoted as a natural element of the curriculum.

The following opportunities will be made available as an integral part of the school's practice, to facilitate the development of spirituality.

In Collective Worship:

- Opportunities for reflection and response planed into worship.
- Stillness.
- Personal and collective beliefs respected.
- Sharing and celebrating common beliefs.
- Celebrating success.
- Sharing happiness, sorrow, hurt, excitement, anticipation, fear etc.
- Common activities such as singing, listening, laughing, playing, reflecting on a theme.
- Remembering and celebrating the lives of people of spiritual significance.
- Emphasising common purposes and values.
- Experiencing emotions.

In English:

- Empathy with authors and the characters in stories, poems and plays.
- The appreciation of beauty in language.
- Emotions and sentiments in writing and speech.
- The value of stories and all they can teach us.
- Imagining oneself as someone else.
- Escaping into other worlds through literature.
- The element of wonder in literature.

In Maths:

- Infinity and nothing.
- Pattern and order.
- Shape and regularity.
- Truth, certainty, and likelihood.
- The wonder of numbers, formulae and equations.

In Religious Education:

- People, places, things, books actions and ideas held by religious believers to be holy.
- Ultimate questions of meaning and purpose.
- Ideas of the divine/questions of God.
- Forms of Worship.
- Use of music, art, drama to express beliefs.
- Varieties of beliefs, celebrations and rituals.
- Ideas of commitment and belonging to groups and institutions.
- The idea of mystery and questions with no clear answers.

In History:

- Being in touch with past people, things, and ideas.
- Being part of history.
- Handling artefacts.
- Influential events and people.
- The commitment of significant people in history.
- War and peace.
- Interpretation in history.
- The nature and importance of invention and exploration.
- Empathy with people from other times in history.
- Consideration of new evidence in history and how understanding and knowledge of the past continually evolves.
- Curiosity about what people in our lives now can tell us about the past.
- Empathy with visitors to the school and their experiences.

In Geography:

- Wonder at the diversity of environments and people.
- Questions about the care of the environment.
- The beliefs behind particular causes and campaigns.
- World (economic) development.
- Land formation.
- Empathy with people from other parts of the world.
- Opportunities to reflect on own values and beliefs, and those from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds.
- Whole world consequences of climate change, and how we are all linked together by our need to protect our planet.
- Traditions from around the world.

In Science:

- Wonder at the basis of science.
- Questions of beginning, creation, and evolution.
- Discovering the limits of experimentation.
- Birth, life, death, and renewal.
- The universe and beyond.
- Regularity and order in science.
- Beliefs in science and the faith of scientists.
- The impact of scientific achievements.
- Awareness of scale of living things, from smallest micro-organisms to largest.
- Recognition of interdependence of all living things and materials.

In Computing:

- The wonder of worldwide instant communication.
- The speed of the growth of knowledge.
- The accessibility of knowledge and contact with other people worldwide.
- Reflecting on how technology is every changing.
- Knowing how to protect ourselves online.
- Expressing ourselves through creative media.

In Physical Education:

- Being a team member.
- Pushing yourself to the limits.
- Extremes of skill, endurance, and achievement.
- Personal limitation and failure.
- Appreciation of effort.
- Sportsmanship.

In Design and Technology:

- Discovering how something works.
- Appreciating genius.
- Beauty in design.
- Perseverance to solve problems.
- Personal achievement.
- Learning from others and nature.

In the Creative Arts (Art, Music, Drama and Dance):

- The works of creative artists from a variety of times and places.
- Expressing, interpreting, and exploring deep feelings and profound beliefs.
- Artistic creativity.
- The effects of the arts on emotions and senses.
- The arts as means of expressing mood.
- Skill in creation and performance, and particularly in personal reflection upon their own creativity using various art forms.
- Effects on the emotions and senses.

- Personal response and preference.
- Music as a chance of reflection and peace, providing feedback to composed music.
- Collaboration of multiple skills.
- Mood.
- Skill.
- Pattern.

These are also highlighted on our curriculum plan.

In addition, as part of the curriculum, the children have opportunities:

- To visit places of beauty, interest and challenge.
- To admire and wonder at the natural environment and human creative efforts.
- To work out personal relationships in unusual and challenging situations.
- To experience community cohesion links at a local, national and global level.
- To engage in charity-based activities.
- To participate in a wide range of events and activities, involving a range of outside agencies, coaches, etc.

To facilitate spiritual development, the organisation of the school and the environment for learning is such that:

Everyone involved in the life of the school is valued and seen to be valued.

- Policies and ensuing practices are clearly seen to reflect the worth of individuals.
- Behaviour and people management policies and practices are collectively arrived at and discussed regularly.
- All adults recognise the need to set good examples of mutual respect and considerate behaviour.
- The quality and nature of the learning environment and displays reflect the value placed on pupils and staff.
- Aesthetic awareness is encouraged.
- The atmosphere of the school welcomes differences in beliefs and values and invites everyone to belong.
- The achievements, successes, and efforts of everyone are recognised and celebrated.

Monitoring and evaluation

Spiritual development cannot be measured and continues throughout our lives. However, opportunities offered to children for spiritual development will be monitored and evaluated in the following ways:

- Observing and listening to children.
- Sharing of classroom work and practice.
- Evidence from pupils' work e.g worship, feedback, RE books, creative writing art.
- Pupil voice.
- Audits of policies, scheme of work and curriculum reviews.
- Discussions at staff and governing body meetings.